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kan dog of to-day is generally a hybrid, much larger and stouter than the original breed.

Along Smith's Sound there is a powerful breed of dogs that do not hesitate to attack the most ferocious wild animal. They frequently hunt in pairs, and two of them will unhesitatingly attack the most formidable bear. They have been tamed for hunting purposes, and they will corner the largest grizzly and hold him at bay until the hunters can shoot him. One dog is powerful enough to bring down a reindeer, and kill him in a minute. They are keen of scent, and can detect the presence of a seal under the ice, or smell a deer a quarter of a mile away. They have a thick, furry coat of a tawny brindled color, and in the winter their bodies are covered with a thick fleece of wool. They so closely resemble the wolf of this region that they are readily mistaken for one. They are very similar in appearance and disposition to the Greenland dogs. In Labrador there is a nondescript stock of dogs so fierce in nature that it is customary to suspend a heavy wooden log by a rope to the neck, which impedes their actions so as to make them less dangerous to man and weaker dogs. The true Labrador dog exhibited on the bench has nothing to do with this variety, for, strictly speaking, the Labrador breed is not a circumpolar creature, for he weakens and dies with the temperature at sixty degrees.

The dog is the least pure of our pet animals. His ancestors were the most depraved types of animals and his title is bad. In the northern latitudes he is taught to carry loads and to hunt wild animals; in the Eastern countries he is a scavenger; and in ancient times he was taught to devour the dead. He has been domesticated and trained for ages so that many of his original traits have been obliterated, but the taint of the jackal is there and the wolfish blood is sure to crop up. Turn him loose and exempt him from man's influence and he soon degenerates and returns to his original mongrel type. The question of placing such an animal upon a pedestal and claiming for him all the good traits and mental endowments of a superior creature is unscientific. If we must have pets there are other creatures cleaner and more intelligent by nature.

GEORGE E. WALSH.

A STRIDE IN IRISH CIVILIZATION.

THE movement in Ireland that is destined to elevate the social condition of the agricultural laborers is an interesting and hopeful outcome of agitation. Although initiated for leverage purposes, with few real friends as sponsors, it acquired a force during the Land League Campaign that compelled recognition by the government.

In the struggle to obtain equitable land laws, strength was added to the public assemblies by the presence of laborers. Their wrongs were discussed on the same platforms from which those of the farmers were eloquently ventilated. The conditions in which they lived were so utterly degrading that it was impossible to attempt a truthful description without presenting a thrilling picture of human suffering. And this picture drew tears from the laborers themselves. The hideousness of their debasement had not been perceived until it came to be set forth by sympathetic speakers.

It did not appear that the laborers were blameful for living in one-roomed hovels with pigs and poultry because there were sanitary laws that made it a misdemeanor to do so. A class steeped in poverty could not rise

from wretchedness without some form of government help. This view was so strongly urged that, when the farmer had received the first substantial advantages from legislation, a law was enacted which encouraged the belief that every laborer would be provided with a cottage and half an acre of land.

It is fifteen years since both houses of the British Parliament passed the measure which was to make a new Ireland. Within that period something over 11,000 cottages have been built and occupied. A very small percentage of the agricultural laboring class is represented in the achievement, but there has been a lesson learned that compels a greater speed in the developments hereafter.

The law of 1883 provided that the Irish Local Government Board could order the carrying out of a scheme of improvement initiated by the local sanitary authority. Cottages could be built and land taken for half-acre plots provided that an agreement could be arrived at with the owners and occupiers. In case of opposition confirmation would have to be made by Act of Parliament.

While the Irish National representatives continued to act as a unit, the machinery of the Land League (National League) was sufficiently powerful to prevent disagreements. The occupiers did not relish the prospect of having choice pieces cut from their farms, but feared to excite the anger of the League by outspoken disapproval. After Parnell was dethroned a new order of things prevailed. The "union of hearts" was dissolved and the farmers, having regained independence, soon manifested their real feelings in regard to allotments.

Fortunately for the ultimate success of the movement a beginning had been made that was enough to intensify the longing for a generous administration of the Act of Parliament. The laborer who had secured a cottage, with the coveted half-acre, was the most envied of the residents of his district.

One would have to be present and witness the transfer of a family from a stone or mud hovel to a three-roomed trim cottage to be able to fully appreciate the elation it produced. Coming into possession of such a house was to the numerous children like the fulfillment of a fairy's promise. At nightfall they crept in and out of the two rooms adjoining, mounted softly by the ladder to the cozy room in the gable, and went to sleep unwillingly, fearing lest the "new grandeur" should vanish.

It was understood that a rent of twenty-four cents a week was to be paid for the privilege of occupation, but that was little enough for the beautiful cottage, not to speak of the bit of land for potatoes and cabbage. Hitherto their fertilizers had gone to improve fields in which they had no interest beyond the crops of one season.

The process of collecting material for an ordinary fertilizer is so painful as to make it appear to be more valuable than gold. In the districts where limestone is employed for road-repairing, grass grows luxuriantly along the road fences. It is gathered by laborers' children, and placed in pits to rot. This is considered to be easy work in comparison to that which, for a similar object, has to be done in the mountainous districts. The materials for road-repairing in the mountains usually have no fertilizing properties, and grass is neither rich nor plentiful. Bare-footed, ragged children often have to travel miles to obtain a few poor wisps for the slimy pits at the front door.

The act of Parliament dating from 1883 was to continue in force for five years, but although known from the first to be a weak measure, it was not amended until 1885. The act then passed gave the Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland and the Privy Council the power to sanction or reject schemes to take by compulsion the lands necessary for allotment. It provided that in certain conditions laborers in towns might be given half-acre gardens, and it defined the agricultural laborer as "a man or woman whose occupation is the doing of agricultural work for hire, and includes a herdsman."

Still, it was not possible to proceed with the administration of the law at more than snail's pace, and in 1886 it was further amended. Fishermen and hand-loom weavers doing agricultural work were brought within the definition of agricultural laborers, and there was a provision for permitting laborers to occupy allotments pending the erection of cottages.

In 1891 the crop of bills during the Parliamentary session included another act to amend. This made it easier to get representations before the Local Government Board in regard to the housing of laborers, and provided for the carrying into effect of an improvement scheme in the event of failure to do so by the local sanitary authority. Each amendment appeared to have some weight, but the opposition was usually so fierce that a further act to amend passed in 1892, increasing the allotments to one acre.

No arguments have been used against the principle of allotments that were strong enough to entitle them to the respect of a disinterested person. Too frequently such arguments are based on no higher ground than the selfishness that is begotten of "land hunger."

If the farmers have a grievance at all it is that the pieces of allotments are nearly always taken from their best fields. It does not matter to them that the rental is reduced in proportion, or that it would be unfair to select the poorest land for the half-acre or acre intended to supply the chief requirements of a family.

The changes in farming operations have rendered it necessary to place the agricultural laborers on a basis of this kind in order to prevent increase of pauperism or wholesale emigration. Farmers are able to get along with very little hired help. Machinery and the system of *Koorring* or exchanging work, have become more popular, especially in the province of Munster. *Koorring* is held in high favor because it brings the young people, sons and daughters of farmers, together nearly every day in harvest. Compensation for hard work includes evenings devoted to feasting and portions of nights to dancing, courting and match-making. There was a time when Irish laborers went every year to England and Scotland to assist at harvesting. Alteration in agricultural methods and depression put an end to this market.

By a later Parliament, still another bill was passed to facilitate the working of the Laborers Acts. It was promised by the government as a concession to the Anti-Parnellites, who had introduced and withdrawn a measure with this object in view. The chief secretary for Ireland, Mr. Gerald Balfour, intimated that something would be done by the Treasury to help to place the cottages and allotments of land upon such a footing as that the local tax-payers may be relieved from the burden of having to pay annually the difference between the amount charged for rent, \$12.48, and the interest on loan for purchase of land and erection of cottage, about \$24.

It is not expected that any scheme for building laborers' cottages will pay directly. At present it costs the tax-payers a great deal to maintain the poor in monster buildings called Unions. Some of these are occupied by as many as 2,000 people each, including sick, infirm and able-bodied. They were originally known as workhouses, and enough was done in them by way of industry, to justify the appellation. Work became unpopular, and

they have since been chiefly remarkable as hot-beds of corrupting influences. The children born within their walls too often go to swell the ranks of the thriftless and the criminal. The system throughout has but one redeeming feature and that is care for the sick.

With a thorough administration of the Laborers' Acts, pauperism would diminish. The self respect generated by removal from the tumble-down, one-roomed hovel to the wholesome, lime-washed cottage would make the poor-house impossible as a refuge.

The Irish people in foreign lands speedily adapt themselves to their surroundings. In their own country the processes which effect a change in habits and customs must be powerful when they succeed against the rooted prejudices of centuries. Bearing this in mind, one cannot view without emotion the results in the case of the Irish laboring class.

It seems a long step from a hovel, with a disease-breeding pool at the front door, to a cottage adorned by trailing vines and bordered by flower-beds bright with color.

This wonderful transformation was accomplished during one season in Ireland. A philanthropic resident of Cork provided flowers and shrubs for the experiment and published a list of prizes for the best flower plots and beds of vegetables. The result was an agreeable surprise to all who visited the cottages. The front yards were tastefully laid out, showing to advantage annuals and perennials.

Those who have travelled in Ireland know that nothing so pitifully appeals to the stranger as the tumble-down houses of the laborers. There is hardly one out of the thirty-two counties wholly free from this blot upon the paternalism which the British governmental system engenders. It would be disappointing to tourists if the hovel and the tatterdemalion were to disappear from the elements that make for the picturesque, but there are few who would not rejoice at such a gain for decency and good morals.

GEORGE HENRY BASSETT.

HUNGER AND POVERTY IN ITALY.

It is the economical condition of Italy which has brought about the present political situation there. The clamor for bread was the cause of the uprising called "bread riots," but the recent revolt was brought on by the government, which, through mere fear of revolution, turned the troops against its unarmed citizens. The reasons for revolt were very strong and have long existed, with consequent agitation against the government. To quell this agitation effectually the government has found the means, and the occasion was made an excuse for entirely suppressing the opposition in the press and in Parliament.

The condition of Italy has not been known abroad because of the strict censorship of the press and the telegraph. The truth could not be told in Italy. All mouths that could not be stopped by corruption or in some other way were silenced by imprisonment or banishment to regions where they would not be heard from. The few who told the truth abroad were not believed, for the truth was too terrible to be believed easily, and it seemed that if such a state of affairs existed it would already have been known.

A disease is known by its symptoms. The fact that each year in Italy a hundred thousand persons go mad with hunger, while thousands die of the *pellagra*, hunger-madness, shows that the malady from which Italy is